

Dear Cedric,

5/14/71

It has been a long time, feeling much longer than it has been, perhaps a reflection of my accelerated aging from the duration and intensity - and frustration - of the work I do. The strange thing is that I've been intending to write you but have stayed too busy nasing the grindstone. My wife decided we should get out a limited mailing on my new book, and her coming to your name jogged me.

There is no change in media attitudes toward writing on the political assassination. Publishers eschew it. The major media still considers it a taboo. The left and underground press, their own kind of Establishment, have interest in and space for only the irresponsible. And I have a publisher whose concept of promotion is silence. To date he has arranged for no single one, opposed all that succeeded - and I await the second instalment of the "advance", overdue since 2/8. With no funds, there is but little I can do to promote. It means, for example, that I can't travel except where the costs are paid.

I suppose you know who Percy Foreman is. He claims, considering the claim not at all immodest, that he is by far the superior of Clarence Darrow. And in more than a thousand murder cases, he has lost but one client to the executioner, a remarkable record. Well, with one of the partners of the publishing business in the building and with me when I learned it, when Foreman, having flown from Texas to New York to do a TV show - after reading FRAME-UP - was being made up and heard that he was to confront me, he quite literally fled the studio. It was 6 p.m., in ample time for the a.m.'s and the wire services, so my publisher not only did not think of trying to exploit this but more, refused to when I asked him to. Having to appear on camera, I was unable to do it myself. I think I need tell you no more about the prospects of this I think excellent book, unless, as in the past, some of the intellectual judo I try succeeds.

I don't even have my meager freebees, 8! And I'm having to buy copies for the press!

Everybody else thinks they have sold out to the FBI. I think they are incompetent and less than honest-and arrogant and vain, as so man scholarly types are inclined to be. But because this is one of the more vigorous exposures of the FBI, a documentation like no other for the world of today, and the most thorough exposure of Justice (including the Department), the suspicion I do not share is not without warrant.

To give you a measure of the left and underground press (I know I needn't of the major Establishment's), I actually filed and won a suit against Justice for some of the suppressed evidence. I nailed Kleindienst in the most blatant and repeated lies, got for them the total immunity of a law suit, and they and this suit, with one exception, went entirely unreported. That one was a young reporter friend on a small radio station. He fed it to AP, which killed it. I rented a room in the Mayflower for a press conference to announce the suit and provide xeroxes of the documentation, made at least two dozen phone calls in advance, got it noted on the UPI's city wire, and three reporters showed up. The Washington Post's filed a column. It was killed. UPI put a half-stick on the wire. I have but a single clipping of its use. The other filed nothing, which is only natural for a Tennessee paper, the crime having been committed there.

The book is a total destruction of the official mythology and of every agency and official involved. Since then I have continued the investigation and have achieved the impossible in several evidentiary and other areas, as you can understand I cannot specify. There is no chance that government will permit Ray to come to trial, for there never was the beginning of a case against him. Now I can acquit him in a dozen new ways.

Through the investigation and writing of the book, not a single of at least a hundred of King's friends and closer associates responded to a single letter, another reading on our times and prevailing attitudes. I hope I am bringing this to an end. There was black coverage of a press conference in NYU 4/4 when I was given the Media Workshop award for both the investigation and the book. Amsterdam News (conservative) gave it p. 1, col. 1 above the fold. Three black magazines covered: Ebony, Jet, and Essence. There was other coverage, all except Canadian and Brazilian, to the best of my knowledge, killed, varying from the city radio station, WNYC, to the London Telegraph (there is a really hot British angle), whose reporter filed a long story.

What I call the crime of silence, including the collaboration of the "liberals" in developing Ameriform fascism, is a depressing thing. If it is not new to me, it is not something I can or will accept.

But if Ray is not killed and we can get him into federal court before this sui generis fascism is more firmly established, we may have a deterring effect on it.

My work on the JFK assassination (hardly a proper description), has been very productive. I must now find time for more writing on it and then hope to find a publisher. Good agents no longer try.

Aside from saying hello again, and asking you to give my best to Sally, I write to report these few things and in the hope that you still write for papers - never see whose readers may have some interest in the fact.

The kids, truly, are the only hope. They are wonderful. The night Foreman fled the studio, where I still had to face Ray's first lawyer, Hanes, the man who turned the dogs and firehoses on Birmingham blacks, after the show, about 8 in the audience, one a new friend, asked me to dinner after the show. They had a special place of their liking in mind, a walk of about a mile and I had a sprained foot. We got there, got seated, and this friend got up and made the following introduction: "Everybody, this is Hal. No generation gap." He may well have been the oldest at 25-4. I just turned 58. I loved it! They are great in other ways. One of these, anticipating there might be some dirty work in editing and having no special equipment, didn't take his outer coat off during the show, not daring to because he had a tape recorder, not spy but home type, under it, the mike down its sleeve! They wanted to be sure I didn't get framed in the editing.

If I can't assume you prosper in the usual sense, I do hope you are well and as happy as one can be today.

Sincerely,

I include the order form not to send you a book but to give you the rather exceptional Publishers' Weekly pre-pub review, from incomplete proofs, without the extensive appendix. Despite his expressed dislike for my polemical writing and my unhidden passion, he has evaluated this as one of the three best books he's read in the past year. Thus, with such ~~excellent~~ a trade review, the published place his only add about a month after the book was out and already losing its shelf space. A one-shot ad in the Times.